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THE MONEY SPINNER

AN ORIGINAL COMEDY

IN TWO ACTS

BY

ARTHUR W. PINERO

Author of "Two Hundred a Year," "La Comete," "Two can Play at that Game," "Daisy's Escape" "Hester's Mystery," "Bygones

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THE MONEY SPINNER.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	Prince's, Manchester, November 8th, 1880.	*St. James's, London, January 8th, 1881.*
Lord Kengussie	Mr. J. Bolton	Mr. W. H. Kendal.
Baron Croodle	Mr. E. J. George	Mr. John Hare.
Harold Boycott	Mr. R. A. Roberts	Mr. J. Clayton.
Jules Faubert	Mr. A. C. Forde	Mr. Mackintosh.
Porter		Mr. D. Verney.
Millicent Boycott	Miss Emily Levellez	Mrs. Kendal.
Dorinda Croodle	Miss Nellie Young	Miss Kate Phillips.
Margot	Miss Kate Thoburn	Mrs. Gaston Murray.

ACT I.—Ten A.M. ACT II.—Ten P.M.

SCENE.—Boycott's Lodgings, 17 Rue Beauvoisine, Rouen.

TIME.—The Present.

THE MONEY SPINNER.

ACT I.

SCENE.—HAROLD BOYCOTT'S *lodgings*, 17, *Rue Beauvoisins, Rouen. Time, ten o'clock in the morning. A large morning room furnished in French fashion, brightly and gaudily. Walls and decorations in white and gold. At back two windows which open on a railed balcony overlooking the centre court. On* R. *of stage, large double doors, closed. On the opposite side a similar opening leading into another apartment, closed by curtains in place of doors. Below doors* R. *a small writing-desk and chair. In the centre an ottoman to seat three people. Between the two windows at back a pretty black pianette; on the top of pianette a folded newspaper and three unopened letters. A small drugget in centre is the only carpeting. Light chairs, mirrors, gold candélabre, etc., to fill spaces. On balcony, outside left window, a small table and two camp-stools. The table is laid for breakfast, prettily, à la Française. The sun is streaming into the room. Lively French music to open. At rise of curtain* MARGOT *enters through doors* R., *carrying a bunch of grapes, a melon, and a bundle of flowers.* MARGOT *is* BOYCOTT'S *housekeeper, and is a blunt and jovial-looking woman of fifty. She wears a blue cotton print dress, with a scrupulously white cap and frilled apron. She closes the doors after her.*

MAR. (*who speaks French-English with the pronounced style of a Frenchwoman, surveying her purchases*) Voilà! there we all are! (*music ceases; she goes up to breakfast table and puts the flowers in a small vase in the centre*) It is grand! (*goes to the opening* L. *and draws curtain—she claps her hands sharply and calls*) Madame Milly! Monsieur Boycott! ze breakfast! Madame Millicent! ze breakfast! (*she goes off calling, through the opening* L., *closing the curtains after her. Directly* MARGOT *has disappeared there is a knocking outside the doors* R. *It is repeated.*

Then the doors slowly open and the head of MONSIEUR JULES FAUBERT *appears*)

FAU. (*who also speaks with the accent of a foreigner*) Boycott, my friend, are you at home? My friend Boycott, do you hear me? (*receiving no answer he enters rather cautiously and looks round. He is in black, wearing a long tightly buttoned frock coat and a tall hat. His hair is red and closely cropped, his voice is soft, and his manner stealthy and mechanical*) Where is Boycott, my friend? Ah, he has not yet taken his breakfast. (*He crosses over to the curtains* L., *and looks through*) No one to be seen. Boycott asks me to call for him at ten o'clock in the morning, and it is now a quarter-past ten by the Great Clock, and he is not visible. (*walking round the room inspecting the objects with curiosity*) Yet he could not have left the house, for I have been watching at the front door since eight o'clock. (*takes letters from top of pianette*) Besides, here are his letters unopened. (*examines them narrowly, scrutinizing the writing, and weighing them in his hand*) One Mr. Boycott, with the postmark of London. Two, Monsieur Boycott, with the postmark of Rouen. Three, Madame Boycott, with the postmark of Paris. (*replacing letters*) Ah, I have not yet the pleasure of the acquaintance of Madame Boycott. Poor soul, perhaps she will know me some day. (*going over to door* R.) Well, I shall call again after breakfast. My friend Boycott is getting very unpunctual—a bad sign—a very bad sign.

Goes quietly out, R., *closing the doors after him as he leaves.* HAROLD *enters from* L., *followed by* MILLICENT *and* MARGOT. MILLICENT *goes to the breakfast table on the balcony.* HAROLD *seats himself dejectedly on ottoman,* C. MILLICENT *is a pretty girl, dressed lightly and tastefully.* HAROLD *a good-looking fellow in a dressing jacket.*

MIL. (*at breakfast table*) Oh, what beautiful grapes! Thank you, Margot.

MAR. I knew madame would love zem. (MILLICENT *sits at table.* MARGOT *fetches newspaper and letters from pianette. coming down* R. *of ottoman*) Lettares for monsieur. (*giving* HAROLD *newspaper and the letters; as* HAROLD *takes them he turns his head sharply towards door* R.)

HAR. (*suspiciously*) There are footsteps on the stairs. Who is there?

MAR. I shall see.

MIL. (*on balcony*) The sun has quite boiled the wine. (MARGOT *has gone to the doors* R., *opened them, and looked out*)

HAR. (*to* MARGOT) Well?

MAR. I do not see zee footsteps, monsieur.

HAR. (*giving* MARGOT *a letter*) Give this letter to your mistress, then go downstairs and ask the *concierge* if he has allowed anyone to pass this morning.

MAR. Yes, monsieur. (MARGOT *takes letter to* MILLICENT, *and then goes out,* R.)

HAR. (*opening his letters; aside*) The curse of these public staircases. One is never free from intrusion, might just as well live on the high road. (*reading letter*) Nothing but ill news from London. Nothing but dreary, dreary disappointment morning after morning. God help us! (*crushes letter and puts it in his pocket; opens the other*) Of course from Gourville, the tailor—will sue me for his account, will he?

MIL. (*from balcony*) How many letters, Harold?

HAR. One, dear.

MIL. From whom?

HAR. (*opening newspaper*) Gourville, the tailor, for his bill.

MIL. Oh, Harold, you ought to pay him.

HAR. Yes, I ought. Who writes to you?

MIL. It is father's handwriting. I don't want to spoil my breakfast, so I shan't open it yet.

HAR. (*irritably*) What, in Heaven's name, does your father want now?

MIL. (*cutting bread*) A couple of my silk dresses for Dorinda, I'll be bound. Or another frockcoat of yours, or a something to make up the rent. Poor dad! down on his luck again, I suppose.

HAR. Yes, but I wish to goodness he wouldn't be so down on other people's. Why does not your sister Dorinda go out into the world and earn her own living, and wear honest stuff dresses, as other women do?

MIL. Poor Dolly is so helpless.

HAR. Helpless! She is clever enough at turning the king at écarté.

MIL. Oh, Harold!

HAR. It is the truth. The first time that I met you at your father's house your ingenious little sister cleared me of six weeks' salary. I don't say she could help her position, poor girl, but it is a false one. I say, let your father give up his ugly little gambling parties and go to Australia.

MIL. The Baron can't dig.

HAR. "Baron," indeed! Well, then, if he can't dig, let him go to——

MIL. Ah, where? Come, Harold, where?

HAR. Well, my darling, don't insist on my allotting a destination to the Baron. It is a point on which I am likely to get a little warm.

MIL. You are unkind, sir. Come to your breakfast, (HAROLD *does not pay any attention but reads newspaper absently*)

HAR. (*aside*) Suicide or a poor fellow from off the quay last night—for what reason I wonder? It's very fine and bright on the quay at night-time. The water looks warm and soft and clear, and if a man has a trouble upon his mind—ugh! I mustn't think of anything like that! (*rises hurriedly and takes newspaper to desk* R., *at which he sits. Turning newspaper and reading*) They were trying criminals yesterday at the Court of Assize. Who is this? (*reading*) "Octave Bernier, a clerk, charged with embezzling the moneys of his employers." Embezzlement! Good heavens! the very thing they would say if——(*reading eagerly*) "Guilty—no extenuation—sentenced ten years." Ten long years. Poor wretch, what do his friends say? —the friends who have respected him? And his young wife?—mocked at by the world, scorned by those who had professed to love her—poor girl—poor girl! (*the paper drops from his hand and he sits thinking.* MILLICENT *has risen from the breakfast table and walks along the balcony to the window,* R. *She now appears there with a flower in her hand, which she has taken from the bouquet on the table*)

MIL. (*opening the window softly*) Harold! (*he does not hear her*) Come to breakfast, like a good boy (*she throws the flower towards him—it falls short—then comes down to him quietly and places her hand on his shoulder*) What is wrong, dear?

HAR. (*starting*) Who is that?

MIL. It is I—Milly. What is the matter?

HAR. What are you doing? Where is Margot? Who was that I heard upon the stairs?

MIL.—I don't know, Harold. Are you angry with me?

HAR. Angry—no. Forgive me, Mil, I was dreaming.

MIL. (*leaning over his chair*) Don't be selfish—halve your thoughts with me. (*kissing him*) I'll buy them of you.

HAR. You are a true woman, always ready to make a bad bargain.

MIL. Ah, I knew something was wrong with you. For the past week you have been so anxious and careworn—have had long deep wrinkles on your poor old forehead (*tracing them with her finger*) like the tramway lines to Soneville—and ugly red eyes that look like danger signals. You are as white as the ceiling, you are silent when not muttering to yourself, and you smoke two dozen cigars and eat a thimbleful of food a day. There is something on your mind; won't you tell me what it is?

HAR. It is nothing—at least almost nothing. As you know, the heads of our firm are superintending the erec-

tion of another great factory at Marseilles, and I am for the moment left alone in Rouen with the sole direction of many hundreds of people, and with great cares and responsibilities. I am a young man—perhaps the position is too grave for me. At any rate I am a little—worried. (*leaning his head on his hand*) That is all.

MIL. You have nothing more to tell me?

HAR. N—no.

MIL. Sure?

HAR. (*painfully*) Yes, I—am—sure. Why do you ask so persistently? (MILLICENT *kneels beside him*)

MIL. I'll whisper it to you. (*drawing his head near hers*) Because, although I have been married nearly two years, I am over head and ears in love with Mr. Harold Boycott. And if I thought that my sweetheart could keep a secret from me it would break my heart. (*they rise.* HAROLD *walks slowly to* C.)

HAR. (C.) Millicent.

MIL. Yes?

HAR. Don't you remember your *old* sweetheart—the man from whom I took you when we became engaged—the man you would have married but for your love for me? Don't you remember?

MIL. Yes, Lord Ronald Kengussie. What of him?

HAR. I wish most sincerely that I had never taken you away from him—I wish that your love for him had been deeper than your love for me—and that you had become his wife. With all my heart I wish it.

MIL. If you have any love for me, you won't speak to me like this, Harold, for shame!

HAR. I wish it because Kengussie is rich and I am poor—because he is a gentleman and I a clerk in a cotton factory—because he would have placed you beyond the reach of trials and dangers, and I, perhaps, may live to drag you down to them.

MIL. Trials and dangers! (*going to* HAROLD) I knew it. Let me share your danger—I ask it as a right.

HAROLD (*kissing her*) You shall share it when it comes. I wish to heaven it were a right I could deny you.

MARGOT *enters door,* R., MILLICENT *starts from* HAROLD.

MAR. (*clapping her hands*) Oh, madame, I am so sorry zat I enter on ze suddenly. I love so to see you kiss Monsieur Boycott.

MIL. Be quiet, Margot!

MAR. Ah, pardon me, madame, but I am a widow. If I had kissed my poor Alphonse more frequently I should now be a happier woman.

HAR. I am afraid you have been gossiping, Margot. Have you asked if any one has called for me this morning?

MAR. Oh, yes, monsieur. A gentleman—a red-headed gentleman—passed up and down ze stairs. He told the *concierge* he would return.

HAR. A red-headed gentleman. (*relieved*) Oh, of course Jules Faubert. (*to* MILLICENT) My new fellow clerk, Milly whom you do not know. A very good, honest fellow (*to* MARGOT) Thank you, Margot. (MARGOT *goes off*, R. HAROLD *and* MILLICENT *seat themselves at table outside window at breakfast*).

MIL. What induces Monsieur Faubert to call for you, Harold?

HAR. He seems to have taken quite a liking to me, and he said it would please him to call for me on his way to business.

MIL. Do you like him?

HAR. Um—I don't know. He has only been in the office about a week, so I can scarcely judge the man. At any rate he sticks to me like a leech. (MARGOT *throws open the doors*, R.)

MAR. Monsieur Faubert!

FAUBERT *enters*. HAROLD *rises and comes down, meeting him*, C.

HAR. Ah, Faubert, how do you do? It is kind of you to call. Have you breakfasted?

FAU. (*shaking his hand*) Thank you—yes. We shall be late for our duties, shall we not?

HAR. What a fellow you are for work! (*they stand talking*)

MAR. (*at door*, R.) I do not like Monsieur Boycott's new *compagnon*. He is soft like the cat and cunning like the fox. A noisy man is a nuisance—a quiet man is a danger. (*Exit*, R.)

HAR. I'll go at once and finish dressing. (*pointing to newspaper*) There is the paper. (*goes to opening*, L.) Oh, Milly, dear, I beg your pardon. This is Monsieur Faubert. Faubert—my wife. (MILLICENT *rises, bows, and resets herself*. FAUBERT *bows profoundly, down stage*, R.)

MIL. How do you do, Monsieur Faubert? (*to* HAROLD) Harold! (*he goes to her*) You have eaten no breakfast.

FAU. (*aside, down stage*) Madame is a pretty woman. Her face reminds me of—(*thoughtfully, tapping his forehead*) Um! of whom does Madame Boycott remind me? (*He sits at writing-table*, R., *and takes up newspaper*)

MIL. (*at table*, L., *to* HAROLD) After all, you didn't tell me your troubles, dear. I shall be so unhappy all day.

HAR. I was a fool to say what I did. I am a little harassed and vexed, that is all.

FAU. (*reading*) "Octave Bernier, a clerk, charged with embezzlement—no extenuation—ten years." Good! Ah,

friend Octave, you don't know how much of that you owe to me. (*kissing his hand to newspaper*) *Au revoir*, Monsieur Bernier.

MIL. (*to* HAROLD) Must you go, dear?

HAR. Fear nothing, darling! all is well. (*to* FAUBERT) I am going to shave, Faubert; wait five minutes. (*he goes off through curtains*, L.)

FAU. (*aside*) To shave! That means a razor. I hate razors. Three times in my life I have been frustrated by a razor. It is such a sudden temptation. (MILLICENT *puts her head round window and looks at* FAUBERT)

MIL. (*aside*) What sort of man is Harold's new friend, I wonder?

FAU. (*aside, gazing at newspaper*) Something tells me I am being looked at. How curious women are!

MIL. Monsieur Faubert!

FAU. (*aside*) I was right. (*he lays aside newspaper and rises*) Madame.

MIL. I am so anxious about my husband. He appears sadly harassed and overworked at his business. Can you tell me if there is any special reason for his anxiety? (FAUBERT *goes up to window*, L. MILLICENT *remains seated*)

FAU. (*aside*) Ah, the fool cannot keep his own secrets. (*to* MILLICENT) I regret I cannot account for it, madame.

MIL. And you work with him in the same counting-house?

FAU. Ah, but in a different channel. His duty leads him one way—mine another. Madame—pardon me.

MIL. Yes?

FAU. Your face seems strangely familiar to me. Have we met before?

MIL. (*looking at him*) I have no recollection of such a pleasure.

FAU. Ah, I am wrong. But a man is always dreaming sweet images, and when he meets with the embodiment of his dreams he sees, of course, a familiar face.

MIL. Oh, thank you, Monsieur Faubert. (*aside*) I don't like this man.

FAU. (*aside*) I have seen this woman before—upon my soul I have.

MARGOT *enters, door* R.

MAR. Madame—the portare with the luggage!

A PORTER, *dressed in a blue blouse, enters, carrying a box and miscellaneous luggage which he deposits up stage*, R.C. MARGOT *then shows him out.*

MIL. (*crossing over to luggage*) Luggage! Whose luggage? (*reading labels*) Good gracious! Papa and Dorinda.

Excuse me, Monsieur Faubert. (*running towards opening* L. *and calling*) Harold! Harold! here's the family! (*runs out* L. FAUBERT *goes to luggage*)

FAU. Papa's luggage—what is papa's name? (*reading label*) Ah, *mon Dieu*, I was right! "The Baron Croodle; passenger from Paris to Rouen." Croodle, the proprietor of a little gambling house in the Rue St. Nicholas—the old swindler! I knew I had seen Madame Boycott's face before this morning. *Diable!* I must silence the Baron! If he recognises me he spoils my game. (*turns up stage and goes out* L. *window on to balcony*)

MARGOT *throws open the door* R. *and enters.*

MAR. Zis way, Monsieur le Baron. Zis way, mademoiselle, if you please.

BARON CROODLE *and* DORINDA *enter.* CROODLE *is an untidy dissolute old man, wearing a tightly buttoned up suit of seedy black, with no perceptible linen. The breast of his coat is decorated with some orders.* DORINDA *is a pretty, fresh-looking girl, in a rather showy travelling dress.*

CROO. (*with a grand air*) Thank you, my good woman, thank you.

DOR. (*effusively*) Oh, papa, what bang-up lodgings!

CROO. Dorinda! (*to* MARGOT) Acquaint Mrs. Boycott with the arrival of her father. (MARGOT *crosses to* L.) Say the word "father" very gently, for though my child expects me, still, as we have been apart for some time, too sudden a joy might prove dangerous.

MAR. Yes, Monsieur le Baron.

CROO. (*taking off his very greasy and disreputable hat*) Stay—take my hat. (MARGOT *takes it with much disgust between her finger and thumb*) And don't let Mrs. Boycott see it before you announce me. The sudden sight of her father's hat might give my child a bit of a shock.

MAR. Yes, Monsieur le Baron. (*goes out* L., CROODLE *and* DORINDA *sit on ottoman,* C.)

DOR. (*lolling back*) Oh, pa, isn't this proper?

CROO. No low English vulgarisms, please, Dorinda.

DOR. And no humbug, please, Baron. (*nudging* CROODLE *with her elbow*) Don't you feel in clover at last, pa, dear?

CROO. Why should I, Dorinda?

DOR. No longer dependent for one's miserable dinner on that wretched gaming saloon, eh?

CROO. Hush, Dolly!

DOR. No more sick headaches over that ghastly *Baccarat*, that dreadful *Lansquenet*, and that horrid *Écarté*. No more card nightmares, no more gambling!

CROO. Of course not—except for our own pleasure.

DOR. No more horrid men to smoke and swear while we look on smiling—no more flares up with the police.

CROO. It is all over.

DOR. No more shameful misery! Oh, I'm so glad! Oh, I'm so glad! (*wiping her eyes*) Pa, I'll go to the English church at Soneville on Sunday, you see if I don't!

CROO. So will I, my darling, if I'm well enough. (CROODLE *takes out a little spirit flask from his pocket and puts it to his lips*)

DOR. Don't, pa, I'll take that away from you if I see you put it to your lips again.

CROO. It's only quinine, Dolly—a tonic for your old father. (FAUBERT *looks in through the window*, R.)

FAU. (*aside*) I don't think my friend Boycott expected the old reprobate and his daughter this morning. Oh, *mon Dieu*, what a family to marry!

MILLICENT *runs in from* L.

MIL. How do you do, daddy? How are you, Doll? (*kisses them*)

CROO. My dear child! My firstborn!

DOR. (R.) You're not so rosy as you used to be, Mill. Oh, I do like the cut of your dress. (*turning about*) I'm a swell, too, ain't I?

MIL. (C.) We are so astonished to see you!

DOR. Didn't you get our letter?

MIL. Yes, and I'm so ashamed of myself, like a simpleton, I forgot to open it. (CROODLE *is again drinking from the flask.* DORINDA *utters a screech*)

MIL. Good gracious! What is the matter?

DOR. Knock it out of his hand, Milly—slap him on the back and choke him.

MIL. (*to* CROODLE) Don't drink that, father—I'll get you some coffee.

CROO. (L.) My child—a little quinine—a tonic for your old father. (HAROLD *enters* L., *dressed for walking.* CROODLE *embraces him*) My dear son-in-law!

HAR. (*coolly*) How do you do, Mr. Croodle?

CROO. Never better, dear boy, never better. Milly says she didn't open my letter this morning, so we come upon you as a pleasant surprise.

HAR. You do—as a surprise. (*seeing* DORINDA) Ah, Dolly, how are you?

DOR. I'm A1, brother-in-law.

CROO. You did not expect, when you rose this morning, that Dorinda and your old father were winging their way to your peaceful little nest, did you?

HAR. No, sir, I did not, and I shall be happy to exchange a few words with you on the subject, at your convenience.

(*crossing over to* DORINDA, *kindly*) You are looking very well, Dolly, dear. (*kisses her*)

CROO. At your service, my dear boy. Milly, show your sister to her room, will you?

MIL. Come along, Doll, you must be tired.

DOR. Take me upstairs and lend me your powder puff, Mill, I shall be as fresh as a lark after that. (MILLICENT *and* DORINDA *cross to opening* L.)

DOR. Got any new dresses, Mill?

MIL. A few.

DOR. Little Madame Vautier, the new Parisian dressmaker, is building me such a rig-out. I'll tell you all about it. (*rapidly*) It's a demi-train skirt—embroidery down the front and round the train—open skirt filled in with deep kilting tied across with ribbon bows—short sleeves edged with fringe. (*goes off* L., *with* MILLICENT, *talking loudly*)

CROO. (L.C.) Light-hearted prattler! Just like her father, Harold—just like his flow of spirits. (*puts flask to his lips as before*) A tonic, dear boy—a trifle of quinine.

HAR. Now, Mr. Croodle!

CROO. I beg your pardon, but, *Baron* Croodle, if you please—a little matter of a title.

HAR. A little matter of humbug and imposition, sir, which you will be good enough to waive with me. (*seats himself at writing table*, R.) Now, Mr. Croodle, I want to know the meaning of this intrusion.

CROO. (*sitting on ottoman*, C.) Certainly, dear lad. I've given up the Parisian establishment; Baron Croodle's gaming saloon in the Rue St. Nicholas is a thing of the past, over which fond memory alone can delight, and the Baron is an independent gentleman. In other words (*tapping his nose*) I am on another and a better game.

HAR. But to what do I owe your uninvited presence here?

CROO. Dear lad, didn't you hear me say I have left Paris?

HAR. Well?

CROO. Well—I have come to Rouen.

HAR. (*rising*) To remain?

CROO. To remain. What more natural than that—having severed my connection with a turbulent capital—I should seek an asylum in the calm repose of my son-in-law's provincial establishment?

HAR. (*advancing firmly to* CROODLE) Mr. Croodle, when two years ago I married your daughter, I did not in any sense of the word wed her family. I took her—I am not ashamed to say it—from a gaming house, from an atmosphere which would have poisoned the mind and contaminated the very soul of a woman an atom less pure than

my dear Milly. Sir, there is contagion in moral as well as in physical maladies, and for this reason I must request that you and poor Dolly instantly withdraw from my house.

CROO. Mr. Harold Boycott, I shall not withdraw from your house.

HAR. (*angrily*) You will not?

CROO. Not if I can help it. When you married my girl you did *not* marry her family, and for that you owe her family distinct reparation.

HAR. I don't understand you.

CROO. At the time you were sweethearting my Milly there was a young Scotch lord after her—dead on, sir, by gad! *Lord Kengussie!* sir—a man with a pound in his bank for every penny piece you could ever hope to scrape up—a man who could and would have pensioned off his father-in-law, and made the poor old gentleman's life a bed of roses. Well, Mr. Boycott, you took my girl from this Lord Kengussie; you, the manager of a cotton factory, spoilt her chance of wealth and a title, and did *not* pension off her devoted old father.

HAR. Well!

CROO. (*rising excitedly*) Well, sir, this Lord Kengussie is on the hook again, he is, by gad! He lost Milly and he is after Dolly. Dead on, sir, deader on than ever. And what is more—she is over head and ears with him, and he'll marry her in less than a year.

HAR. And what have I to do with all this?

CROO. (*seizing him by the coat*) Why, if you don't stick to us, Harold, we shall go to smash. Kengussie makes it a condition that I give up my gaming-table in Paris—my living boy, my bread and meat—and give Dolly, poor girl, a twelvemonth of gentility before he marries her. I thought of you, son-in-law, for yours is the only respectable house I know, and you were always open-hearted when you had the coin, and Kengussie thought of you, too. You won't lose by it in the end. Don't throw us over! If the air of the Rue St. Nicholas was bad for Milly, it's as bad for Dolly, and Dolly is as good a girl as ever breathed. Stick to us and we shall float—throw us over and we are as homeless and hopeless as the cur in the gutter that every one kicks and shies at! Give us a helping hand, do! do! do! (*he sinks trembling and exhausted on ottoman and puts the flask to his lips.* HAROLD *walks slowly to* R. *and back again pondering*)

HAR. Mr. Croodle, I am a poor man, and at this moment I am weighed down by certain business cares which forbid my incurring fresh responsibilities.

CROO. (*whimpering*) Oh dear! oh dear!

HAR. But, for Milly's sake and for the sake of Milly's sister, you are welcome.

CROO. (*taking his hand*) God bless you, dear lad. God bless you! Kengussie will turn up shortly and he'll be delighted. (CROODLE *is about to drink from flask again when* HAROLD *interposes and takes it from him.*)

HAR. Pardon me, father-in-law, but there are one or two restrictions which I invariably impose on my guests——

CROO. A little very respectable quinine, nothing more, dear lad.

HAR. The first is—brandy at seasonable times. (HAROLD *goes up to window,* R., *and flings the flask out into the court below.* FAUBERT *is not in sight at the time*) It is Lord Kengussie's desire that your new life be one of conventional respectability, and I shall respect that desire. If your craving for tonics is too freely indulged in, I shall be compelled to tell you that your welcome here is at an end.

CROO. Under your roof we shall be respectable enough for a prince, not to speak of a Scotch lord. I must tell Dolly, I must, by gad! (*goes to* L.) Dolly, we are to stay! We are respectable, by gad! For the first time in our lives we're d—— respectable. (*hurries off,* L.)

HAR. Poor devil! I couldn't have done less. (*looks at watch*) How late! I dread to go to my desk, but I must not stay longer, it would appear suspicious.

FAUBERT, *who has been out of sight upon the balcony, now enters through window,* R.

FAU. (R.) Boycott, are you ready?

HAR. (C.) Oh, Faubert, a thousand pardons, I had forgotten you. Some unexpected arrivals disconcerted me.

FAU. Let us waste no more time. (*goes to door,* R.)

HAR. I am ready, old fellow.

MILLICENT *enters from* L., *followed by* DORINDA; *they come to* HAROLD.

MIL. Dolly has told me everything, Harold, and papa says that he and Dolly are to stay. Dolly wants to thank you, dear.

HAR. Nonsense! (DORINDA *comes to* HAROLD, *wiping her eyes*)

DOR. Harold dear, I made up a speech on the second floor landing. It was a very pretty speech, and I—I—I've forgotten it. (*throwing her arms round him*) Harold, you're a brick.

HAR. You're a goose. Good-bye Milly. I'm off.

MIL. Good-bye, dear. Don't be late.

HAR. No—now then, Faubert.

FAU. (*up at door—bowing to* MILLICENT) Madame. (MILLICENT *bows in return*)

HAR. (*aside*) Shall I ever leave this house again with a light heart, I wonder. (*takes* FAUBERT'S *arm and they go off*, R.)

DOR. (*sitting* L. *of ottoman*) Who's your foxy friend?

MIL. (*sitting* R. *of ottoman*) A new clerk at the factory. He runs after Harold.

CROODLE *re-enters from* L. *in* HAROLD'S *dressing jacket and slippers, and smoking a cigar.*

CROO. I've taken the liberty, girls, of borrowing dear Harold' sjacket and slippers. (*going up to window*, L.) If, there is a cup of coffee going, I don't mind partaking.

MARGOT *enters from* L. CROODLE *intercepts her and speaks in an undertone.*

CROO. My dear, in the court below you will find a silver flask which by accident dropped from the balcony. Get it refilled with the best—the very best—brandy—make it an item of domestic expenditure. I shall not forget you.

MAR. Yes, Monsieur le Baron. (MARGOT *crosses over to* R. *doors*)

MIL. Where are you going, Margot? (CROODLE *puts his fingers to his lips.* MARGOT *does not notice him*)

MAR. To fetch a zomething for your dear papa. (*she goes out.* CROODLE *sits at table on balcony*)

DOR. (*to* MILLICENT) I've always dropped in for your left-off goods all my life, Mill—old dresses, old boots, old gloves. Not that I mind, dear, for you're a good sort, and an old garment is better than new when it has been worn by you. And now I've come in for your old sweetheart, Ronald Kengussie. Poor Ronald, he's soft but he's good, like a sponge-cake.

MIL. Mind you are good to him, Dolly, for he's as kind-hearted as ever man was. I treated him so badly, but I'm glad you are to be his wife, because you will be able to befriend me when he runs me down.

DOR. Lord bless you, he never runs you down, he always speaks of you as if you were a very valuable specimen of a museum mummy, a precious something to be talked about in whispers, and not even to be dusted by sacrilegious hands. I'll tell you a secret, Milly.

MIL. What! a secret?

DOR. (*whispering*) Ronald Kengussie loves me now because he loved you two years ago.

MIL. What do you mean?

DOR. I'm not a bit like you, Mill, I know that. I was

always no end of a rough sort; not soft and gentle as you are: but there must be something in my face which reminds him of you—some look in the eyes or some toss of the head—and he loves me for it.

MIL. Nonsense, Dolly, he loves you for yourself, I know.

DOR. I know better, and I'm glad of it.

MIL. You are glad of it? (*rising*)

DOR. Yes, because I want him to think me like you. Since you left us I've had two more years of the little house in the Rue St. Nicholas, and I'm no better for it. And I love old Ronald with all my soul because he's fool enough to look at a girl like me.

MIL. Hush! Don't talk like that, Dolly.

DOR. I wish he was poor, so that I could work for him. I wish he was ill, so that I could nurse him. I'm not clever at anything but cutting an ace now and then, but I would slave for Ronald till my hands dropped off—I would, I would, I would!

MIL. (*kissing her*) Dear old Dolly!

DOR. Ay, if Kengussie were in rags and walking the muddy street without a shoe to his foot, I'd sit up all night to work him a pair of woollen slippers!

CROO. (*at table on balcony*) Dorinda, cut your father a slice of melon!

DOR. That's right, dad, make yourself at home. (*goes up and sits with* CROODLE *on balcony*)

MIL. (*aside*) I shall be so happy when Dolly is married. I shall feel then that we can bid good-bye to even the recollection of our old life.

HAROLD *enters quickly from doors*, R., *closing doors after him. He comes to* MILLICENT. *Seeing* CROODLE *and* DORINDA *on balcony, he speaks in an undertone. His manner is agitated.*

MIL. Harold! Back already!

HAR. Hush! Something has happened!

MIL. Something happened? Tell me, Harold, quickly. You are ill—I see it in your face. What is it?

HAR. Sit down. (*she sits* L. *of ottoman, he* R.) Are you brave, Milly?

MIL. Oh, Harold, what is it you have to tell me?

HAR. Sweetheart, I promised you that when the time came you should share my trials and dangers. I have brought them to you now. (MILLICENT *looks at him and puts her hand in his*) But I have not told you that when you share my dangers you must share also my crimes.

MIL. Your crimes! (*she withdraws her hand*)

HAR. My friends will designate my acts as crimes, so will the law. Milly, I have taken moneys which do not

belong to me, and I am in trouble. What have you to say to me? (*rising.* MILLICENT *rises with him and kisses him fondly*)

MIL. Nothing. (HAROLD *goes over to* R., *and seats himself at desk; when seated* MILLICENT *kneels at his feet*) Tell me about it.

HAR. You know how fond I am of my young brother? You know that from the day we were both left orphans I have tried to stand in the place of a father to him. Well, three weeks ago, I suddenly hear from him that he has lost in betting a very large sum. The money must be paid at once, or our name would be dishonored, and my brother would never be able to hold up his head again. Algy explained that five hundred pounds was owing to him from a friend, who he confidently expected would pay him in a few days. But his debtor was in Norway, and the matter would bear no delay. His only chance was that I should be able to help him.

MIL. And you did, you dear, generous Harold!

HAR. I had not the amount. My whole savings were not nearly enough. But during the absence of the heads of the firm at Marseilles I have had the entire conduct of the factory, and the daily handling of large sums of money. Why should I not save my brother by employing part of this money? It would be repaid before the return of my employers. Who would be the wiser, who would be the worse?

MIL. Oh, Harold, and your brother has not returned the money?

HAR. His friend—curse him!—failed to pay him. My brother has written to him day after day, but, as I heard this morning, till now without result. Milly, darling, I am a ruined and dishonored man. I have just heard that M. Ribot, the head of the factory, returns to-day; to-morrow I shall have to account for every penny which has passed through my hands. I have betrayed my trust, and I can hope for no mercy. (MILLICENT *takes off her bracelets and necklace and gives them to* HAROLD)

MIL. I have some more jewellery and a little money upstairs, dear, I will fetch it. (*she is about to rise; he detains her*)

HAR. My dear little wife, it is useless. (*places jewellery on desk*) As I told you, my debt to the firm is more than ten thousand francs.

MIL. Ten thousand francs! Oh, Harold, how can we raise so large a sum by to-morrow?

HAR. It is impossible, there is no hope.

MIL. (*rising*) There is hope, there must be hope. I will get it—I will get it if I die for it.

MARGOT *enters door*, R.

MAR. Lord Kengussie!

LORD KENGUSSIE *enters.* MARGOT *goes out.* KENGUSSIE *is a fair-haired, mild-looking young Scotchman.*

MIL. How do you do, Lord Kengussie?

KEN. (C.) Bless me, how are you? (*shaking her hand*) How is Mr. —— dear me, there goes his name. I've no memory. (HAROLD *advances*) How do you do? (*taking* HAROLD'S *hand*) This is an awful intrusion, but the fact is I knew Dolly was here and I have not seen her since yesterday, and I wanted to know if she was pretty comfortable, which, of course, I knew she would be with you, and I wished particularly to renew my acquaintance with you and Mrs. —— bless me, there goes the name again.

HAR. I am very pleased to see you. (*leading him to window* L.) Here is Dolly—and Mr. Croodle.

KEN. (*aside*) Yes, I thought I scented the Baron. (HAROLD *and* KENGUSSIE *join* CROODLE *and* DORINDA *on the balcony*)

MIL. (*aside, down stage*, R. C.) Ten thousand francs or exposure and disgrace. Money or ruin. What shall I do? Cry, and give up the game as others do?

KEN. (*from up stage*) You have always rosy cheeks, Dolly dear. You shall never lose them if I can help it, by Jove!

MIL. (*aside*) Kengussie! He is so rich. He might help me. Shall I ask my rejected lover to help the man who took me from him? Oh, I cannot! I am a weaker creature than I thought. I cannot do that. Oh, how I wish I were back in the little gaming house in Paris, in all my old misery and wretchedness, with my pack of cards. Cards! cards! Why should they not help me! (*covering her face with her hands*) No, no—not again. And yet, why not? Nothing can undo the past—why am I so squeamish now? (KENGUSSIE *comes down*, L. C.)

KEN. Haven't you anything to say to me, Mrs. —— confound it, there goes the name again. Haven't you anything to say to an old friend, Milly? (MILLICENT *takes necklace and bracelets from table and advances to* KENGUSSIE)

MIL. I am very pleased to see you again, Lord Kengussie. (*sitting on ottoman*, R.)

KEN. (*leaning over ottoman at back*) Thanks.

MIL. (*putting on necklace*) And so delighted to hear about you and dear Dolly.

KEN. (*he arranges the fastenings of* MILLICENT'S *neck-*

face) Yes, I am in love with Dolly. She is your sister, you know.

MIL. Yes, I know.

KEN. She is so unlike, and yet so like you. Is it very wicked for a fellow to marry a young lady because she resembles some one else?

MIL. Yes, very wicked.

KEN. Then I deserve to be hanged. (MILLICENT *is arranging a bracelet; she holds out her hand to* KENGUSSIE; *he fastens bracelet*) Permit me.

MIL. Do you notice much change in me?

KEN. Yes, you are very jolly and kind, which you used not to be.

MIL. We grow wiser as we grow older. All wise people are kind.

KEN. All kind people are not wise. Look at me. I try to be kind and my friends tell me I'm a regular fool.

MIL. How can they be so rude?

KEN. They speak the truth—I am a fool; you made a fool of me two years ago.

MIL. You are not very kind now; you contrived to be much pleasanter in the old days.

KEN. Yes, in the old days I never opened my mouth; now that you are married I can talk, somehow.

MIL. How glad you must be, then, that I am married. How long do you remain in Rouen?

KEN. I leave here to-morrow for MucKairn, in Argyleshire, and Dolly is to remain in your care.

MIL. Let me see as much of you as possible. Stay! I have a bright idea.

KEN. I am sure you have.

MIL. This is such a happy reunion—I will give a little party to-night, a nice, quiet, little family party. You are one of our family now, you know.

CROO. (*loudly from balcony*) That's the fellow, sir—stabbed his wife in the left lung with a carving-knife, by Gad!

KEN. (*glancing over his shoulder towards* CROODLE) Yes, I know.

MIL. Will you come?

KEN. Of course—you know I will.

MIL. And I have another idea. We two will have a match at Ecarté. We are old enemies at cards, and I owe you your revenge. (*softly*) Kengussie, I have not played at Ecarté since we two played together, two years ago, in the little house, in the Rue St. Nicholas.

KEN. I never was much of a hand at Ecarté, but I always liked to sit opposite to you, in those old days—to sit opposite you and look into your face.

MIL. You will play better now. Those old days have

made their bow and departed. Now the face, for wl you used to neglect the game, has lost its freshness. D forget—cards at ten.

KEN. I shall not forget, Mrs. —— by Jove! there the name!

MIL. Boycott.

KEN. Never mind—"Milly" will do. I shall not for Milly. (DORINDA *comes from balcony*)

DOR. (*to* KENGUSSIE—*sharply*) Ronald!

KEN. I beg your pardon!

DOR. Pray don't make a mistake. We are two siste that is Milly, this is Dolly—one is married, the o single.

KEN. Just so.

MIL. (*hastily*) Dolly dear, play something. I n play now.

KEN. Do, Doll. (KENGUSSIE *takes* DORINDA *to the pian and stands by her side*)

MIL. (*to* HAROLD) Harold! (HAROLD *comes do* Harold—keep a firm, brave heart, and go down to the tory again as if all were well. There is—there is—hop

HAR. (R. *of ottoman*) Hope! (DORINDA *plays a li air* (*French*) *very softly on the piano*)

MIL. Don't ask me how, or why. Leave all to me, question nothing I say or do.

HAR. Milly, you are mad.

MIL. Have you forgotten what I was in my fath house, in the Rue St. Nicholas, before you rescued me f its misery and degradation? Have you forgotten w they called me then, because of my never-failing g fortune—because of my *luck*. They called me the *Mo Spinner!* I shall see if I can spin now, as I could then!

HAR. No, no, Milly—I forbid it!

The doors R. *open and* FAUBERT *enters.* DORINDA *ce playing.*

FAU. Pardon my entering unannounced—your serv is absent. Boycott, our Monsieur Ribot has returned f Marseilles, and requires to see you.

MIL. (*aside to* HAROLD) Have courage!

HAR. (*going up to* FAUBERT) I am ready.

MIL. (*rising*) Monsieur Faubert, we have a little far party here to-night; cards and reminiscences at o'clock. Will you join us?

FAU. (*bowing*) Madame, I shall be so happy.

MIL (*reseating herself*) Harold, introduce Mons Faubert.

HAR. (*taking* FAUBERT'S *arm*) Faubert, my sister-in-l

Miss Croodle. Lord Kengussie, Monsieur Jules Faubert. (DORINDA *nods;* KENGUSSIE *bows;* HAROLD *takes* FAUBERT *over to* L.)

DOR. (*aside to* KENGUSSIE) I hate sandy men! (*looking at* KENGUSSIE'S *fair hair*) Oh, I beg pardon, Ronald.

HAR. (*to* CROODLE) Mr. Croodle, let me introduce you to my friend Faubert. (HAROLD *leaves* FAUBERT L., *and joins* KENGUSSIE *and* DORINDA *at piano*)

CROO. (*entering from balcony*) "*Baron*" Croodle, my son-in-law should have said. How d'ye do? (*starting back with surprise*) *Grognon!*

FAU. (*laying his finger on his lips*) Hush! Keep my secret, and it will be well for you. (FAUBERT *looks quietly at* CROODLE *and then goes over to* R. *of ottoman and speaks to* MILLICENT)

FAU. (*to* MILLICENT) Madame, you will never pardon me. I am always trying to take your good husband away from you (*they talk*)

CROO. (L.) Dorinda!

DOR. Yes, pa. (DORINDA *leaves* HAROLD *and* KENGUSSIE *and joins* CROODLE)

CROO. (*aside to* DORINDA—*trembling*) Dolly! don't you recognize that fellow Faubert?

DOR. Not a bit.

CROO. You haven't the scent that I have. Not a word, not a whisper of what I'm going to tell you. That man is *Pierre Grognon, one of the best known detectives in the Parisian Police!*

DOR. What of it!

CROO. What of it? He is a worm with the sting of a serpent. What the devil is he doing here?

DOR. He is a clerk now in Harold's factory. I suppose he has given up collaring swindlers—become one himself. (*she returns to the pianette and reseats herself.* HAROLD *goes to* R. CROODLE *stands* L., *aghast*)

HAR. Are you coming, Faubert?

FAU. Certainly, my friend. (*to* MILLICENT—*bowing*) Au revoir, Madame—we meet to-night. (DORINDA *resumes playing softly.* FAUBERT *goes up and bows to her and* KENGUSSIE, *speaking a few words to them in an undertone, as* MILLICENT *speaks*)

MIL. (*aside on ottoman*) To-night! What will that bring? The Money Spinner and the man who once loved her so dearly. Oh, what is it I am going to do? What am I going to do? (*she buries her face in her hands.* FAUBERT *joins* HAROLD)

HAR. Come, Faubert. (*as they are leaving, the doors* R. *are thrown open, and* MARGOT *appears with* CROODLE'S *spirit flask*)

MAR. (*loudly, holding up flask*) Ze brandy for Mon-

sieur le Baron! (DORINDA *bursts out laughing and very forte*—CROODLE *hastily goes out through the o* L. *as the curtain falls quickly*)

End of Act 1.

HAROLD. DORINDA. KENGUSSIE.

FAUBERT.

MARGOT. CRO

MILLICENT.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Same as in Act I. Night time. Windows and bright moonlight on balcony. Doors* R. *closed tains* L. *closed. Ottoman removed to* L. *down Down stage* R.C. *a small card table with green bai on which are two packs of cards, lighted candle, shade and small bell. Chair* R. *and* L. *of card One or two camp stools on balcony. Pianette c lighted, also lighted candles round room. Soft mental music to open. At rise of curtain* DORI *discovered seated on balcony outside of* R. *window is dressed smartly for the evening.* CROODLE *is asl ottoman down* L. *with his legs on a chair and a c handkerchief thrown over his face. He is attired i rusty evening dress, and wears the Ribbon of the of Honor.*

DOR. (*looking at the stars*) How late that old playing! Some big fellow's birthday, I suppose! V jolly night for sentimental soliloquy! How beautif stars are! Regular diamonds of the first water! I a think that the stars are hung out to encourage good while the moon looks on and bullies the bad ones moon has such a painfully judicial air! I believe i the pay of the English School Boards! (*music c* CROODLE *snores gently*) I wonder whether that water I hear, running through the bridges and lappi sides of the quay! How balmy the air is—and how Milly's dresses are round the waist! How kind of M lend me her swell dress, and how hard that I sho squeezed in on such a heavenly night! (*she rises and into the room*) Pa has dropped off! (*she walks on over to* CROODLE) Poor pa. I hope life will run sm

for him for the future! (*softly*) There is so much to admire in poor old pa! (CROODLE *sleepily turns up the part of the handkerchief covering his mouth and mechanically raises his spirit flask to his lips—then replaces handkerchief and drops off again with the flask in his hand, and without noticing* DORINDA)

DOR. (*with a shudder.*) Ugh! How horrid!

CROO. (*uneasily in his sleep*) Double on the red, no getting out of it! What a lot can be done by a twist of the wrist, by gad!

DOR. He is dreaming that he is back in the Rue St. Nicholas! Oh! I can't bear to think of that dreadful place! Why do they leave me here? They know how it frightens me to be left alone!

HAROLD *enters, dressed as in* 1*st Act, from door* R. *His manner is excited.*

DOR. (*running to him*) Oh, Harold, I am so glad you have come.

HAR. Ah, Dolly! Yes, I am late, but I couldn't get back earlier. Old Ribot has returned, Ribot the head of the firm, a hard-fisted, hard-hearted, grasping old miser, and has been overhauling all the factory books, ha! ha! I have worried him, but I give up my keys to-morrow; and then he can have his revenge upon me! What's the matter, Dolly?

DOR. Nothing! I'm nervous to-night! And feel frightfully off color, that's all!

HAR. Where is Milly?

DOR. Dressing.

HAR. I'll send her to you. (HAROLD *crosses to* L. *and sees* CROODLE) Why, your father is keeping you company.

DOR. (*returning to her seat on balcony*) Yes, I've been listening to him, he's been snoring! How jolly! (HAROLD *looks down on* CROODLE)

HAR. Poor old fellow! Tired, perhaps! (*sees flask in his hand*) Confound him, at that wretched brandy again! (*takes flask from* CROODLE'S *hand*) This is the old reprobate's master! But what a warm-hearted master! How different to Ribot! Ugh! How cold I feel! (*puts flask to his lips and drains it eagerly*) That's good. Poor broken-down father-in-law! Do as you please, this is Liberty Hall—till to-morrow! (*he lets the flask fall upon* CROODLE, *who wakes up and rubs his eyes.* HAROLD *goes to opening,* L. MILLICENT *comes through the curtains and meets him.* MILLICENT *is very prettily dressed for the evening*)

MIL. Harold, returned! Has anything occurred?

HAR. Nothing!

MIL. That is good news! Go and dress, it is half-pa nine! Our guests will be here soon.

HAR. What are you going to do? What plan have yc in your mind?

MIL. That is my secret! Go and dress, and, Harold, l happy to-night!

HAR. Happy!

MIL. Yes, trust in me, and don't look at me all tl evening!

DOR. (*from window*, R.) Is that you, Milly?

MIL. Yes, Dolly! (HAROLD *kisses* MILLICENT *and go out through curtains*, L. MILLICENT *crosses over to ca table and sits* L. *of it. She takes up a pack of card* CROODLE *has now thoroughly awakened and is puttir the flask to his lips*)

CROO. Not a drain, by gad! And I've slept till I' chilled. What bad measure Margot brought. Perha the woman tipples. Ugh! How filthy!

MIL. (*from card table*) Papa, I want you.

CROO. (*crossing to her*) Yes, pet. (MILLICENT *loo round to see that* DORINDA *is not listening.* DORINDA *still on balcony, but not in sight*) With your old frien again, Mill?

MIL. (*letting the cards run through her hands*) These Yes!

CROO. (*putting his forefinger on the king*) How the o monarch smiles on you! he's glad to see us together agair he's delighted, by gad!

MIL. Father, I haven't touched the pack since I left yo two years ago.

CROO. (C.) For shame, Milly, for shame! They serve you so well, too! (*patting her head*) Ah, it was a blo to me when I lost ye. What an eye you had—what wrist! They used to say you had ten fingers to eac hand.

MIL. Hush, father.

CROO. Dorinda's a fool to you, a well-meaning girl, bu an empty-headed, brainless fool! (*whimpering and wipin his eye*) She has been a tax upon me, a drain! I've lost h her—lost by her. She was always in need of new boo and new gloves—with hundreds of buttons. I went dow lower and lower when you left me. What was it th devils used to call you, Mill?

MIL. I don't know—I forget.

CROO. Money Spinner, my pet goldfinch! Money Spi ner, my lady bird.

MIL. Oh, no! father!

CROO. It's true! You know the science. How yo tongue used to rattle and how your eyes sparkled! Th boobies stared at your face, and you fleeced 'em. And the

you broke your poor old father's heart and left him alone with a chit of a chit who never brought in a sou and always grizzled for new gloves and new boots, with hundreds of buttons.

MIL. Father, I wonder if I have forgotten the old trick, if my eyes have grown dim, and my fingers thick and clumsy?

CROO. Not you, my cherub, not you; it's a gift of Providence and never leaves one. (CROODLE *goes round to* R. *of table and takes up the pack of cards*) Are you going to play to-night, Milly?

MIL. Perhaps.

CROO. What?

MIL. If I play—*Ecarté.*

CROO. Ay, Ay! Shall I refresh your memory, eh?

MIL. Father.

CROO. Shall I? Eh! Shall I?

MIL. Yes. (CROODLE *stands facing* MILLICENT, *with his back to the audience. The pack he holds is prepared for the business*)

CROO. (*taking out King of Hearts, and holding it up*) The King of Hearts, Mill; I love him, he is so kind to me. See! (*he is supposed to replace the card, and then shuffles vigorously*) Who is to have him, Mill, you or I?

MIL. Give it to me, father.

CROO. Greedy girl, greedy girl! Her father's own child! (*he deals five cards to each—three at a time, and then two; the King of Hearts which, after shuffling, he has made the bottom card of the pack, he deals to* MILLICENT) Show them, Milly, show them? (MILLICENT *turns her cards face upwards, and takes from them the King, which she holds up*)

CROO. (R. *of table*) There he is! There he is! That's the way to deal, Mill, that's the way to deal!

MIL. Yes, two years ago, dad, not now!

DORINDA *appears at* R. *window, and comes down to back of table.*

CROO. Why not now, Milly? Only two classes of people are lucky at cards—the fools and the knaves. The fools because of their blind courage, the knaves because of their skill. If you are not certain that you are a fool, my child, take your old man's lesson to heart, and play with the science.

DOR. (*sternly*) Now then, pa, shut up.

CROO. Ugh! You vulgar child.

DOR. I know I'm vulgar—in appearance, dress, manner—everything. It is in my blood and it will never come out of it. I know I'm vulgar, but I'm going to be honest. How dare you say such things to Millicent? How dare

you preach your dreadful sermons to an honest man's wife?

CROO. Dear! The way the offspring speaks to the author of her sublunary existence. Go away!

DOR. I will not!

MIL. Don't anger father, Dolly.

DOR. I will anger him, because he angers me. Children are children only as long as they know no better than their parents; when they do know better, the parents become their children's children, and are to be whipped and stood in the corner.

CROO. Be silent, or you'll break my heart.

MARGOT *enters door*, R., *followed by* KENGUSSIE. MARGOT *is in black with cap and apron.* KENGUSSIE *in evening dress.*

MAR. Lord Kengussie! (MARGOT *goes out.* KENGUSSIE *kisses* DORINDA, *and shakes hands with* MILLICENT)

KEN. How are you, Dolly? (*to* MILLICENT) How are you Mrs.——? Confound it, there goes the name again! I had it on the stairs. (*to* CROODLE) Good-evening, Baron.

CROO. Ah! Kengussie, you see us once more together—three happy birds chirping in the same nest. (*wiping his eye*) A pretty picture, I venture to think, a pretty picture.

KEN. (*looking at* DOLLY) Very.

MIL. Harold will be down directly.

KEN. (*to* DORINDA) Let us look at the stairs—I mean stare at the stars! (DORINDA *takes his arm*) Will you be a star-gazer, Milly? (*to* MILLICENT)

DOR. Boycott.

KEN. Of course, Milly Boycott.

MIL. Certainly, I will. (DORINDA, KENGUSSIE, *and* MILLICENT *go up to window,* L. CROODLE *shakes his fist at* DORINDA, *she looks over her shoulder, sees him, and makes an ugly face at him; they go out on balcony*)

CROO. (*down* R.C.) Let the girl be careful, or I will dismiss her from my affections. (*laying his hand on his heart*) I feel a vacuum here already, here—and elsewhere. I wonder whether there is a loose sandwich or two in the next room? It is my natural disposition to prey. (*spelling it*) P-r-e-y. I will prey upon the victuals, by gad. (*he goes quietly out through curtains* L.)

MARGOT *enters door*, R.

MAR. Monsieur Faubert!

FAUBERT *enters in evening dress.* MILLICENT *advances to meet him; they shake hands.*

MAR. (*at door, looking at* FAUBERT) I hate him. He

kissed me on ze stairs, almost against my will. I am fifty years old, so it is not for love. He has a motive—*mon Dieu*, I do hate him.

MIL. (*to* MARGOT) Margot, the curtains. (*music.* MILLICENT *comes down with* FAUBERT. MARGOT *exits to* L. *To* FAUBERT) Mr. Boycott returned so late. He will be down soon. (MARGOT *draws the curtains from across opening* L. *The room beyond is well lighted, and the end of a supper table is seen laid for supper*) Here he is.

HAROLD *enters through opening in evening dress.* MARGOT *goes out* L.

HAR. Ah, Faubert, very glad to see you! Dolly—Kengussie. (KENGUSSIE *comes down, followed by* DOLLY; FAUBERT *bows to them*) There's something laid in the next room; on condition that nobody dignifies it by the title of supper, I propose we go and look at it. (MILLICENT *takes* KENGUSSIE'S *arm.* FAUBERT *bows to* DORINDA; *she takes his arm, they go laughing and chatting through the opening,* L., *followed by* HAROLD. MARGOT *appears* L., *drops the curtains, then retires,* L.)

After a pause CROODLE *enters through the curtains, with a sandwich in one hand and a claw of lobster in the other.*

CROO. I can't stand that Frenchman's eye, the fellow has a look that would open an oyster. (*he sits on ottoman,* L. *There is a burst of laughter from further room. Eating*) They are getting on tolerably well without me. (MARGOT *comes from* L. *carrying a tray towards* R.; CROODLE *stops her*) Be good enough to fetch me the least drop of brandy. Stay, bring the decanter and I'll measure it myself.

MAR. Yes, I will. (*she goes through the curtains off,* L.)

CROO. How men can eat without drinking I never can understand! The idea, to me, is dog-like, and revolting. (MARGOT *returning with decanter and glass on tray.* CROODLE *takes decanter, removes stopper, sniffs the contents*)

MAR. (*holding out glass to him*) Ze glass.

CROO. No, thank you. I have all I require! (MARGOT *points to the decanter and pantomimes, by raising her hand to her mouth, that she knows he will drink out of it*)

MAR. Oh! Yes, I see! Bravo! A very good idea! Ha! ha! (*she goes out,* R.)

CROO. What is the matter with the woman, I wonder? I suppose I have noticed her beyond the requirements of her station. Vanity! Vanity! (*he takes out his flask from his pocket and commences to fill it from the decanter*)

MILLICENT *and* KENGUSSIE *enter from* L. *and stroll over to window,* R. *not observing* CROODLE.

MIL. It is too warm there.

KEN. It does suggest the tropics.

MIL. Oh, what a delicious breeze! (*they stand looking out of window,* R. CROODLE *sees them, and while their backs are turned sneaks off with the flask and decanter out of window,* L. *He gets between the two windows out of sight.* MILLICENT *and* KENGUSSIE *turn down stage,* R.)

KEN. (*down* R. C. *by table*) Here are the cards. Shall we play?

MIL. (*coming down, falteringly*) Do you—do you wish to play?

KEN. I should like to, for the sake of old times.

MIL. We'll play, then—for the sake of old times. (MILLICENT *sits* R. *of table.* KENGUSSIE *faces her.* DORINDA *appears* L., *and looks at them. They do not observe her*) Face to face—once more—two old enemies.

KEN. Two old friends.

MIL. Is there friendship at cards? Did you read that a brother and sister—twins—stabbed each other at the St. Sever last week, over a game of faro?

KEN. What a warning to all twins!

MIL. Are you ready?

KEN. For you to stab?

MIL. For me to cut—same thing. (*they cut the cards*)

KEN. Our old stakes?

MIL. If you please, or double them. Two years' rest makes one reckless.

KEN. Double them. (MILLICENT *deals*)

KEN. Why, how your hand trembles!

MIL. The air is so warm here. Don't notice me; it is nothing. (*they play as at Ecarté.* KENGUSSIE *marks the king*)

DOR. (*watching from* L.) I made up my mind in the railway carriage, when we were leaving Paris, that I wouldn't be jealous, and I thought I was as firm as a rock. But, oh! I have such a sickening sensation at my heart when I see them together!

KEN. Why, you are positively allowing me to win. I shall be proud of my skill after to-night.

MIL. (*faintly*) I promised you your revenge. (*aside*) I can't play to-night. (*putting her hand to her head*) I think I am going mad. Oh, Harold! Harold!

KEN. (*to* MILLICENT) Coupez. (*marks.* MILLICENT *cuts cards.* KENGUSSIE *deals*)

DOR. What are you playing, Kengussie?

KEN. Ecarté.

DOR. (*going up to piano*) Two are company. Three are none.

(*to* KENGUSSIE) Je propose.
Combien?
Trois. (MILLICENT *discards.* KENGUSSIE *re-*

(*aside*) How wrong of Milly to allow Ronald to
le is such a fool at a card table. (*to* KENGUSSIE,
down C.) Ronald! (KENGUSSIE *does not hear,*
NT *plays a card*)
(*triumphantly playing a card*) Le roi.
Ah!
Good gracious! Ronald is winning!
Fortune smiles on me. I kiss my hand to fortune,
s a woman.
Ay, and as false as her human sisters.

BERT *and* HAROLD *enter from* L., *smoking cigarettes*
id chatting. HAROLD *sits,* L.

(*starting to* L.) Monsieur Faubert!
(*advancing to her*) Miss Croodle?
I'm a cigarette smoker. (FAUBERT *takes out*
case) Isn't it horrid in a woman?
Not at all. (*gives one and lights it by his*)
(*aside*) I'll do anything to annoy Ronald to-night.
es me mad. (*pause*)
(*reprovingly*) Dorinda! What are you doing?
Enjoying myself.
(*turning towards her*) I say, Dorinda—you know
iat.
Thanks; but we are not particularly intent upon
each other to-night. (*she goes up to* L. *window*
)
(*to* FAUBERT, L.) Do you bet?
Never.
(*over his shoulder, to* HAROLD) I am enjoying my
for long ago. You'll never believe it—I'm the
player in the world—and I triumph!
(*from window*) Harold, I want you. (HAROLD
RINDA, *and sits*)
(*aside*) Madame seems disturbed. (*crosses to* R.)
(*throwing down cards*) Ah! what frightful ill-

Poor Millicent! (MILLICENT *tears a leaf from the*
ook, and writes on it an I. O. U., and gives it to
SIE)
A thousand francs. (*aside*) My only hope is
om me. We are lost!
Thanks. Are you tired?
(*rousing herself*) Not I! I'll play till I vanquish
ired! Double the stakes! (MILLICENT *rings the*

bell, which stands on card table. There is a crash of broken glass heard from outside window)

DOR. Good gracious!
HAR. What is that?
MIL. It is that careless Margot. } (*Spoken together.*)
KEN. What the deuce——

CROODLE *enters uneasily through window,* L.

CROO. Don't be alarmed, my children. A window in the neighborhood, I think. Nothing more serious.

DOR. I didn't know you were there, papa.

MARGOT *enters from* R.

MAR. Yes, madame?

MIL. Cards, Margot—quick!

MAR. Yes, madame. (MARGOT *crosses to opening,* L. *As she is leaving,* CROODLE *pulls the skirt of her dress)*

CROO. (*aside to* MARGOT) Margot, my dear, I've had a trifling mishap with the decanter. You'll find it in the court below. (MARGOT *laughs*) Don't laugh, you vixen! Don't laugh! (MARGOT *laughs, and goes out,* L., *followed by* CROODLE)

FAU. (*back of table, to* MILLICENT) Does madame often play Ecarté?

MIL. No—not now.

FAU. Madame is wise, for the stakes are high, and fortune is her enemy.

MIL. Yes.

KEN. (*to* FAUBERT) You will see; luck will change.

MIL. (*staring forward*) Perhaps. (FAUBERT *goes to desk,* R., *takes up book, and stands watching*)

MARGOT *re-enters, carrying a tray on which are two packs of cards, a syphon, a small decanter of brandy and soda-water glass.*

MAR. (*to* MILLICENT) Ze cards for Ecarté, madame. (MILLICENT *takes cards, giving the two old packs to* MARGOT. KENGUSSIE *pours himself out a soda and brandy.* MARGOT *then withdraws,* R.)

MIL. (*taking a fresh pack*) Coupez. (*they cut.* MILLICENT *deals—as she does so, a card falls unnoticed from the pack, and lies at her feet.* FAUBERT *is* R. *by desk; he sees the card upon the ground, is about to call attention to it—but restrains himself*)

KEN. (*playing a card*) I play. (*they play.* FAUBERT *watches them*)

KEN. (*taking a trick*) Ah!

MIL. (*aside*) I must win—I must win! (KENGUSSIE *plays again—*MILLICENT *covers his card—he takes the trick*)

KEN. (*triumphantly*) Another!

MIL. (*aside*) Ruin!

KEN. (*plays*) Un grand coup! (KENGUSSIE *raises his glass, and drinks to* MILLICENT)

KEN. To my victim. (MILLICENT *bows*—KENGUSSIE *drinks*)

MIL. (*aside*) If he only knew what to-morrow will bring me! (*at this moment* DORINDA *from up the stage laughs loudly.* KENGUSSIE *looks round—as he does so,* MILLICENT *discovers the card at her feet, and picks it up*)

MIL. (*aside*) Ah! the very card! (*she plays it quickly, thrusting one of the cards she holds in her hand into her pocket*) Voilà!

KEN. (*looks round*) By Jove! the luck *has* turned.

MIL. Kengussie—Ronald!

KEN. Yes?

MIL. I . . . nothing. (*aside*) What have I done? What have I done?

KEN. Your play, Milly. (*they continue the play*—FAUBERT *crosses to* C., *eyeing them*)

FAU. (*aside*) Ah, I thought Madame Boycott's luck would change . . . she turns the table on the fool of a Scotch lord. Grognon, will you be fooled too by pretty Madame Boycott? How do I stand? . . . My friend Boycott is sorely in need of money, and to-morrow should fall into my hands. I cannot spare him—I am too proud of my glorious, my useful, profession, to let him slip now . . . I must have my friend Boycott.

KEN. (*throwing down cards*) Fortune deserts me. (*he tears up* MILLICENT'S *I. O. U., then takes notes from pocket-book, and pushes them to* MILLICENT)

KEN. Your game. A thousand francs—again—we'll make a night of it.

FAU. (*aside*) A thousand francs out of ten, and Madame Boycott's luck returned! (*sits on chair,* L.) If Madame Boycott wins ten thousand francs from Lord Kengussie to-night my friend Boycott meets his liabilities to-morrow, and I lose my pretty little case. I cannot spare my friend Boycott. I will warn the fool of a Scotch lord. (*he takes out a pocket-book tears a leaf from it, and writes.* DORINDA *rises*)

DOR. (*to* HAROLD) What feverish verses you used to send to Milly in your courting days?

HAR. (*by her side*) Did I?

DOR. (*coming into room*) Do you remember some lines you begged me to lay upon her pillow—the night you thought she had thrown you over? She had had a bilious attack, and wouldn't see you.

HAR. I remember Milly's illness—I don't remember the verses.

DOR. *I* do. She took them with a Seidlitz powder. They began :—

" My fate is cursed if I do live without thee,
To-day—to-morrow.
Bind but a single golden raven auburn hair about me,
And I must follow ! "

I forget the rest. (*she plays an air softly on the piano. Pause.* FAUBERT *moves deliberately over to* KENGUSSIE *who is playing intently, and lays the little note before him on the table*)

FAU. Pardon me, Lord Kengussie—that is a nice method of marking at Ecarté—read it.

KEN. (*absently—not looking up*) Thank you. (FAUBERT *returns to sofa.* KENGUSSIE *plays a card*)

KEN. Stop ! I didn't intend to play that !

MIL. Too late !

KEN. (*throwing down his cards*) Once more. I thought Fortune was only flirting with me. Again. (*they cut cards.* MILLICENT *commences to deal.* KENGUSSIE *picks up* FAUBERT'S *note*)

KEN. What is this? (*he reads*) I don't quite comprehend—who placed this upon the table.

MIL. Monsieur Faubert, did he not? What is the matter?

KEN. (*aside, reading the note again*) Great heavens ! I can't—I *won't*—believe it !

MIL. Kengussie, what ails you?

KEN. (*looking at her fixedly*) You have made a mistake in your play.

MIL. A mistake?

KEN. You know it. I can read that you know it in your face. I will play no more.

MIL. What do you mean? Why do you look at me like that?

KEN. (*raises his glass to his lips and drains it. Looking at paper*) I mean that I believe what is written here. I'll play no more. (*he is about to rise; she seizes his arm*)

MIL. Show me that paper.

KEN. I will not.

MIL. Show me that paper !

KEN. I cannot.

MIL. Lord Kengussie—Ronald—give it me, please. (*he slowly hands it to her*)

KEN. Tell me, what am I to think? (*she reads it quickly*)

MIL. (*with a stifled cry*) Oh !

KEN. Is it false—or true?

MIL. Don't speak to me so harshly ! (*pushing the notes towards him*) Take them away from me, take them away !

KEN. Is it false or true?

MIL. Ronald—I—it—is. (*throwing* FAUBERT'S *note to* KENGUSSIE) Believe every word of it, if you care to. (*her head drops upon the table; she cries bitterly.* DORINDA *ceases playing.* HAROLD *turns*)

HAR. Millicent! (KENGUSSIE *rises, and flings the cards to the ground*)

KEN. (R. C.) You are too clever for me here, and fool me on all sides.

HAR. (C.) What is the meaning of this, Lord Kengussie?

KEN. It means, Mr.—I am rude enough to forget your name for the moment—that I am about to quit your house with a settled determination to enter it again on no account whatever.

HAR. Thank you—as you please.

KEN. And that I do not exactly sympathize with the constitution of a household into which a man is lured as a guest to be cheated at play. (DORINDA *comes from piano to* MILLICENT)

HAR. (*fiercely*) Cheated!

KEN. I repeat, sir, cheated.

DOR. (*to* MILLICENT) You're a good sister, to rob the man I am to marry. Don't you think I am low enough in his eyes as it is, without you degrading me still more?

MIL. (*to* DORINDA) Oh, Dolly, have pity.

HAR. You shall prove your accusation, Lord Kengussie.

KEN. I say, do you really think that to your advantage?

CROODLE *enters through curtains,* L.

CROO. (L. C.) What is it? Is there anything in dispute, children? Any little point at cards that papa can settle?

DOR. That's right, father. See your girls now. See what your sermons have brought them to.

CROO. Ugh! You ungrateful child.

HAR. (*to* KENGUSSIE) You are not now in Scotland, my lord; you must answer to me for your language.

KEN. Certainly. (*pointing to* FAUBERT, *who is seated quietly on ottoman,* L.) In company with that gentleman—rise—the writer of that note. (FAUBERT *rises calmly*)

HAR. Let me see that paper?

KEN. (*giving* FAUBERT'S *note to* HAROLD) By all means.

FAU. (*quickly*) It is marked "Private." Perhaps I do not understand the Scotch etiquette in reference to a private communication.

KEN. (*haughtily*) In Scotland, sir, two persons are necessary to an agreement. I am under no obligation to you to share alone the advantages of your ingenious discoveries. (FAUBERT *inclines his head*)

HAR. (*reads*) "Remember that the lady to whom you are at this moment losing your money is the daughter of a notorious blackleg. (CROODLE *goes up stage*) Remember, also, that she was known in Paris, in the Rue St. Nicholas, by the sobriquet of 'The Money Spinner.' Play if you choose; she is cheating you." (*to* KENGUSSIE, *pointing at* FAUBERT.) This man, my lord, for the last week, or longer, has fastened himself upon me and sought my companionship. To-night he is my guest—accepting my hospitality. (*approaching* FAUBERT) Jules Faubert—you dog! (*he strikes* FAUBERT *upon the breast.* FAUBERT *rouses himself for a moment as if about to return the blow, then regains his composure, and remains perfectly still*)

CROO. (*up stage*) Son-in-law, don't be hasty, don't be hasty.

DOR. You don't know who your precious friend is—I do—and I can tell you.

CROO. Dorinda!

DOR. That man's name is not Faubert, he is Pierre Grognon, a detective in the Parisian police. (CROODLE *hastily goes out*)

HAR. (*starting back*) Oh, what have I done!

MIL. (*rising*) Harold.

KEN. (*to* FAUBERT) Monsieur—whatever your name may be—tell me, have I indeed the honor of meeting a distinguished officer of the Parisian police?

FAU. It is true. I am (*proudly*) Pierre Grognon.

HAR. What do you here?

FAU. Since I am known I need no longer conceal my mission. I am watching Mr. Harold Boycott, a clerk in Ribot's factory, who is suspected by his employer of—a crime. (HAROLD *sinks on seat at piano and covers his face with his hands*)

KEN. A crime?

MIL. And you have grasped my husband's hand under the mask of friendship with this in your heart. (*she sits*, R.)

FAU. Madame, we fulfil our useful offices under many guises; it is one of the most sublime offices of friendship that it can be employed for the purposes of detection of crime. Monsieur Ribot requested that I should keep my eye upon Mr. Harold Boycott, whose strength of mind he mistrusted, and I have carried out my instructions to the letter. The task would have been a painful one to so sensitive a man as myself had it not consoled me with the society of Madame Boycott.

KEN. I do not doubt, sir, that you have performed expediently your most miserable duty. (*advancing to him*) May I ask you, as a personal favor, that you will step outside that door (*pointing to* R.), and remain there

(*looking at watch*) for about a quarter of an hour (*goes to doors*, R.), as far away from the keyhole as is consistent with your habits and your employer's instructions?

FAU. I am happy in being able to oblige you! (*goes to doors*, R. *and then turns*) Shall I have an opportunity of paying my adieux to your lordship?

KEN. I shall doubtless require to see you again.

FAU. In any case I shall consider it my duty not to be far away from this spot until to-morrow. (*with a bow he goes out through doors*, R., *closing them carefully after him.* KENGUSSIE *goes to* MILLICENT, *who is down* R. DORINDA *eyes them*)

KEN. Millicent.

MIL. Yes.

KEN. I want to speak to you alone. (DORINDA, *overhearing, quietly goes on to balcony through window*, R., *unperceived*)

MIL. You see how wretched—how humiliated I am! What more do you wish to say to me?

KEN. I must speak to you alone. (MILLICENT *rises and goes to* HAROLD, *who is seated at piano*)

MIL. (*to* HAROLD) I have some explanation to give to Lord Kengussie, Harold, will you leave us? (HAROLD *rises, kisses* MILLICENT'S *hand and goes to* L.)

HAR. (*at curtains, to* KENGUSSIE) Lord Kengussie, of course, does not intend to quit this house without my knowledge? (*he goes out*, L. MILLICENT *comes down to ottoman*, L., *and sits.* KENGUSSIE *looks around the room and appears satisfied that they are alone*)

MIL. What have you to say to me?

KEN. (*calmly*) My dear Millicent.

MIL. My husband's name is Boycott, Lord Kengussie.

KEN. Thank you—you know my failing. My dear Mrs. Boycott, I did to-night, for the first time in my life, within my remembrance, lose control over my temper.

MIL. Well?

KEN. Well, my dear Mrs. Boycott—I knew I should get the name—the consequences are so serious to me as to induce me to hope most fervently that such an occurrence will never repeat itself.

MIL. What is this to me?

KEN. It may be of interest to you, inasmuch as it explains my foolish outburst at dropping a few hundred francs at that card table.

MIL. (*eagerly*) You don't believe, then, what that letter told you—you don't believe that I cheated you at cards?

KEN. (*very quietly*) Yes, I do. Upon my honor. (MILLICENT *sinks back again.* KENGUSSIE *takes a chair and sits*, C.) Understand the reason of my annoyance. I am annoyed, not because I am cheated at cards, but because I

was so weak as to imagine that such a simple fool as myself could ever be anything to a pretty woman but a toy and a pastime.

MIL. You don't know. You don't understand.

KEN. (*lighting a cigarette*) I do know, and I do understand that I should have read long since the true character of the girl who, two years ago, cheated me at love as lightly as she to-night cheated me at play—who won from me then a heart, which was of value to me, as easily as she wins now the wretched money, which I despise.

MIL. (*rising*) Have pity on me! Have pity on me!

KEN. (*rising and replacing his chair*) Oh! if we are to indulge in sentiment, it is I who deserve some pity. When I met you years ago, I cast aside all prejudices, all conventionalities of opinion. I knew you to be (pardon my plainness) the daughter of a sharper—an English adventurer, whose name reeked with ill-odor in Florence, Monaco, and Brussels, and who had been driven to an obscure quarter of Paris to eke out a miserable existence with the aid of his two children—his decoys.

MIL. This is unmanly of you—this is cruel.

KEN. But a woman once loved by a man becomes in his mind a something apart from all other women; much higher, or much lower. I never considered your origin—to me you were as the highest lady in the land. And when you discarded me I had no hard name for you, but thought sadly of myself as of a poor fellow who lacked the qualities which win the love of a good, pure girl.

MIL. (*laying her head upon his arm*) Oh! hear me for a moment.

KEN. (*taking his arm from her*) A moment, and I shall have finished. This morning I came to you, the promised husband of your sister—poor Dolly. I can never give Dolly the affection I gave you, and she guesses it; but she knows, and you know, that I am an honest man, and will do my duty. I loved Dolly because at odd times her voice had the ring of yours, and her eyes the brightness of yours.

MIL. I won't hear you speak any more; you—you torture me!

KEN. I have done. I merely wish to put one question to you. Don't you think you did wrong to make a fool of me at *Ecarté?* Don't you think I merited something less or something more? That perhaps I deserved at your hands something better? (*he sits*, R. C., *smoking his cigarette.* MILLICENT *comes to him slowly, and lays her hand upon his shoulder*)

MIL. Ronald, I did cheat you at the cards! (*he inclines his head in assent*) I was tempted sorely. You heard what that man Grognon said—that he had been employed by

Monsieur Ribot, the head of my Harold's firm, to watch him?

KEN. Yes. (*rising*) I beg your pardon, won't you sit down?

MIL. (*kneeling quickly*) No, let me kneel. I will tell you everything. Harold has used moneys which do not belong to him for investment in London—not with dishonest intent, believe me. He thought to repay the money before the return of his absent employers to Rouen, but the London scheme failed, and all our savings are gone, and we are penniless. Harold had no idea that he was suspected; he is to hand over his books and accounts to-morrow, and is in desperate need of ten thousand francs to save himself and his wife from ruin. I meant to win ten thousand francs from you at play, and, Heaven forgive me, I meant to do it dishonestly. (KENGUSSIE *sits and takes her hand*)

KEN. Milly, why did you not give me the confidence which, from a woman I once loved, I should have esteemed an honor? Why did you not come to me and say, "I can speak to you as I can speak to no other man in the world besides my husband. I am in distress, will you help me?" Milly, why did you not trust me?

MIL. Because I was too great a coward to beg of the man whom two years ago I cast off without a word of sympathy or kindness; because there is bad blood in me, and I am a cheat by nature; because, to women trained as I have been, it is so much easier to sin. (DORINDA, *who has been listening at intervals, comes from balcony through window*, L.)

KEN. (*rising and raising* MILLICENT) My dear little friend, I find that I have been mistaken. I know nothing of women. I am a bigger fool than I thought. (DORINDA *comes down and puts her arm round* MILLICENT'S *waist*)

DOR. (*on* MILLICENT'S L.) Oh, Milly, dear, I shall never forgive myself for having been angry with you.

MIL. Dolly!

DOR. (*wiping her eyes*) I was jealous of you, Milly, and I've been listening. I never guessed that you were over head and heels in trouble, and I am ashamed of myself, dear, I am indeed.

KEN. My dear Dorinda, it is not considered usual, I may remark, for a young lady to play the eavesdropper.

DOR. Yes; I know that folks in your station are in the habit of drawing the line somewhere. I'm not well-bred enough to know where the line is to be drawn, and I'm not squeamish. (*advancing, C., to* KENGUSSIE) Look here, Kengussie; you've been making some very disrespectful observations about my pa. He's not so good and not so bad as other people's pa's, but I owe him the luxury of being

here at this moment, and that's all I care about. Now, don't you think you had better go and leave us to share our troubles amongst us? I shall stick to Millicent as long as I have breath in my body—and you and me, I don't think we mix well.

KEN. Dolly, dear, you must give me another chance! (*he holds out his hand to* MILLICENT; *she takes it*) Milly, it is very womanly to be very weak, and the weakness of woman deserves, I have been taught, nothing but the most respectful sympathy. I never thought higher of you than I do at this moment. Forgive me for every harsh thing I have said and done!

MIL. I need forgiveness. I have nothing to forgive.

KEN. We will not argue that point. Dolly, oblige me by calling your father and Mr.—— there goes the name again—and Milly's husband. (DORINDA *goes off*, L., *quickly.* KENGUSSIE *crosses to table*, R., *and rings bell*)

MIL. Oh, Lord Kengussie, what must you think of me?

KEN. (*leading her to ottoman*) I think that your tears distress me beyond measure, and I think I know that if you had honoured me by becoming my wife, you would, had there been such miserable need, have suffered as much for my sake as you are now suffering for my friend, your husband.

MARGOT *enters doors*, R.

MAR. Did madame ring?

KEN. (*crosses to* MARGOT) There is a gentleman waiting for me, is there not? Monsieur—— I forget his name?

MAR. (*looking at* KENGUSSIE) A gentleman wiz hair like my lord.

KEN. (*disconcerted*) Well, I should have hardly thought —— however, that's the man. Will you ask him to come up?

MAR. (*jerking thumb towards doors*, R.) Ha! He is sitting on ze stairs outside.

KEN. Is he? I hope he has caught a very severe cold. (MARGOT *laughs and claps her hands and goes off*, R.)

HAROLD *enters*, L., *followed by* CROODLE *and* DORINDA. DORINDA *joins* MILLICENT *on ottoman.*

KEN. (*taking* HAROLD'S *hand*) Mr.—um—Millicent's husband, I want you to allow an old acquaintance to put himself right with you. I want you to forgive my almost unpardonable rudeness.

HAR. Lord Kengussie.

KEN. Will you do me the kindness to consider me your friend?

HAR. There is a cloud hanging over me—a black one. You have yet to learn the story of my folly.

KEN. I know everything. I know now that you are a man in great trouble, and I offer you my sincere sympathy.

HAR. Thank you from my heart.

KEN. And more than this, I demand a right—the right to help you in your difficulties by all means in my power. I have long had a predilection for commerce; will you consider me your banker?

HAR. Lord Kengussie—I——

KEN. Hush! You are under no obligations to me. You are in a scrape to-day. I may be in one to-morrow. It will then be your right to help me, and I shall not fail to seek you. (CROODLE *presses forward and seizes* KENGUSSIE'S *hand*)

CROO. My dear Kengussie, any question as to your eligibility for the position of my son-in-law I now consider removed. I may have had my doubts, but I am sure it will ease your mind when I tell you that your present manly conduct thoroughly convinces me that you are a—gentleman!

MARGOT *enters, followed by* FAUBERT.

MAR. Monsieur Faubert. (MARGOT *scowls at* FAUBERT *as he enters and wipes her lips with her apron. Aside*) He has done it once more, *mon Dieu*. How I do hate him. (*goes out*, R.)

KEN. (*to* FAUBERT) I am sorry to have detained you, pardon me. You can now, however, go home to bed.

FAU. My duty to Monsieur Ribot?

KEN. You can perform, as you have said, to the very letter. But let me satisfy your mind upon one point. Let me tell you, sir, that my friend (*pointing to* HAROLD) has incurred no liability to his employers that he will not be able to meet to-morrow to the fullest extent.

FAU. I congratulate Mr. Boycott.

KEN. For your method of marking at *Ecarté*, I thank you; but understand me, I prefer, and shall adhere, to the old system. (FAUBERT *bows;* KENGUSSIE *advances behind him, and touches his arm; quietly*) If you have a grain of manhood in you, do not breathe a word against the lady who has to-night equally honored you and me by condescending to be our hostess. I have influence in Paris—you understand me?

FAU. Perfectly.

KEN. I shall probably have occasion to see you to-morrow morning. (*giving his card*) Hotel d'Angleterre—be with me at ten o'clock. (*he takes from his chain a handsome hunting watch*) Don't be late, (*giving watch to* FAUBERT) don't be late; that is an excellent timekeeper, let it remind you of our appointment. Good-night,

FAU. (*pockets the watch, goes to door, then turns, inclining his head to* MILLICENT *and* DORINDA) Madame—mademoiselle, adieu! Mr. Boycott—Baron—adieu! Ha! I do not receive one word—one token. May I beg your consideration? (*looks at* HAROLD) I have been struck tonight upon the face. When you all speak and think against me, count in my favor what I suffer in the knowledge that it is my duty alone that forbids me to return that blow. (*to* KENGUSSIE) Au revoir! (DORINDA *runs over to* KENGUSSIE *and throws her arms around him*)

DOR. Oh, Ronald, you are too good to me. But I'll try to be a nice girl, for your sake! I won't smoke another cigarette, and I'll never talk slang; and when you see me again, you shall find me a regular tip-top lady.

CROO. Dorinda, this is very humiliating for your father.

KEN. Ah, Dolly! when you learn all my faults you'll discover what a good little soul you are.

MARGOT *enters*, R., *with* KENGUSSIE'S *overcoat and hat.*

MAR. My lord's coat and hat. The red-headed gentleman said I was to bring them up.

KEN. Confound his impudence! (*he takes them from* MARGOT *and gives her some silver*) Thank you. (MARGOT *goes out*) Good-night, Baron.

CROO. (*advances and shakes hands*) Be careful of the night air, my boy! I don't think a drop of brandy would do you any harm. (*beamingly*) After our sad excitement, I don't think a drop of brandy would do any of us any harm.

KEN. No, thanks. (DORINDA *assists* KENGUSSIE *to put on his coat.* CROODLE *retires and strolls out through curtains*, L. HAROLD *advances and takes* KENGUSSIE'S *hand*)

HAR. (*to* KENGUSSIE) I must seek some other opportunity to tell you what I think—what I feel.

KEN. Nonsense. We shall meet to-morrow. I shall delay my departure till you are quite through your difficulties—and, by the bye, old friend, you and this interesting little city must part company. You must consider my little influence in England quite at your service. (HAROLD *grasps* KENGUSSIE'S *hand and then turns up stage*, L.)

DOR. I'll see you downstairs, Ronald, if you promise not to kiss me.

KEN. I promise.

DOR. (*indignantly*) Well! I never! (*the air of "Auld Lang Syne" is played very feelingly.* KENGUSSIE *advances*, C., *towards* MILLICENT, *who is seated on ottoman*, L.)

KEN. I am going, Milly. (*she rises and comes slowly to him; he takes her hand*) Good-night.

MIL. (*hanging her head*) Don't say anything to me, I can't bear it.

KEN. (*to* HAROLD) I say—er—um—Milly's husband!

HAR. (*turning round*) I beg pardon.

KEN. May I claim the privilege of an old friend and a future brother?

HAR. (*with a smile*) Of course. (DORINDA, *who is listening, hides her face with her arm so that she may not see* KENGUSSIE *and* MILLICENT. KENGUSSIE *takes* MILLICENT'S *hand and kisses her upon the forehead*)

KEN. (*quietly to* MILLICENT) For auld lang syne. (KENGUSSIE *goes up to* DORINDA *at door*, R. CROODLE *appears in opening*, L., *with a wineglass in his hand, drinking to* KENGUSSIE. *The music swells as the curtain falls*)

CURTAIN.

DRAWING ROOM.

Only kept in the large size, the back scene is 13 feet long and 9 feet high and extends with the Wings and Borders to 20 feet long and 11½ feet high. In the centre is a French window, leading down to the ground, which could be made practicable if required. On the left wing is a fireplace with mirror above, and on the right wing is an oil painting. The whole scene is tastefully ornamented and beautifully coloured, forming a most elegant picture. The above is a representation of a box scene consisting of 38 sheets of paper, the extra sheets being used for the doors each side.

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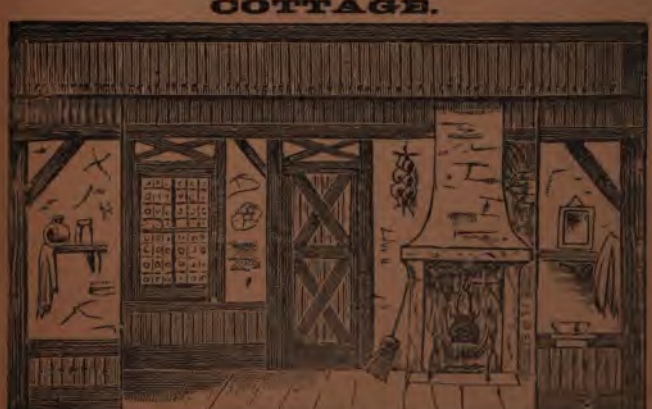

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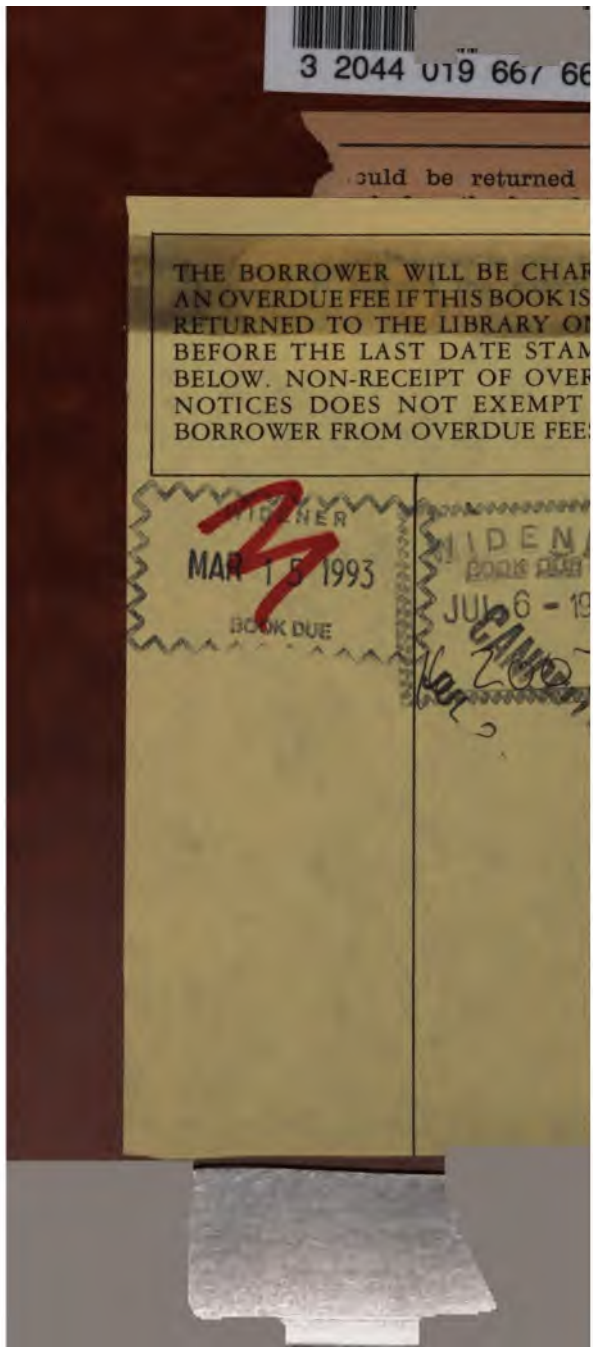
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